

Remarks

Claims 1-9 are pending in the application and were rejected. By this paper, arguments are presented regarding the patentability of claims 1-9, and reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-9 were rejected under § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,963,647 to Downing et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,488,203 to Stoutenburg et al. Without agreeing that the Examiner's proposed combination discloses all features of any of claims 1-9, Applicants respectfully believe that the proposed combination is improper. For example, it is unclear how Stoutenburg et al. '203 qualifies as prior art. In that regard, it is noted that the inventorship is the same for Stoutenburg et al. '203 and the present application. Furthermore, Stoutenburg et al. '203 did not publish prior to the filing date of the present application. Thus, Applicants respectfully believe that the § 103(a) rejection is improper and should be withdrawn.

Previously Filed Information Disclosure Statements

Regarding the Information Disclosure Statements filed on December 28, 2000 and March 8, 2002, no initialed copies of the associated PTO/SB/08A and/or PTO/SB/08B forms were provided with the Office Action. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request initialed copies of such forms.


For the Examiner's convenience, copies of the Information Disclosure Statements as filed are attached. Copies of postcard receipts, which verify receipt of the Information Disclosure Statements by the United States Patent and Trademark Office, are also attached.

Conclusion

Applicants have made a genuine effort to respond to each of the Examiner's objections and rejections in advancing the prosecution of this case. Applicants believe that all formal and substantive requirements for patentability have been met and that this case is in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested. If any additional issues need to be resolved, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at his earliest convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: May 2, 2005

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